

CITY STAFF ANALYSIS

HUTTO PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE DRAFT REPORT



Background

CITY COUNCIL FORMS PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

On January 17, 2013, the Hutto City Council formed a Public Safety Task Force. The goals of the Public Safety Task Force were to assist in the development of a comprehensive public safety plan for the Hutto community by identifying various components to be included in an overall plan.

It was anticipated that the plan would be the key to the future of excellence in the provision of public safety for Hutto.

The Task Force was given a duration of 24 months to complete its work and the City Council provided the following guidelines to the Task Force.

TASK FORCE GUIDELINES

There were four guidelines provided but the Task Force was not limited to considering:

- Building relationships that lead to collaboration and effectiveness from planning, improving, implementing and leading all aspects of public safety in Hutto.
- Gain clear knowledge and perspective of current system, the gaps associated with it, opportunities for improvement and future issues in public safety.
- Experience in collaborative planning of improvements to directly address issues within a cross-functional conversation of public safety leaders.
- Provide a written executive summary of recommendations for the comprehensive public safety plan for the Hutto City Council to use in planning major improvements over the next 10 years.

TASK FORCE DRAFT REPORT SUMMARY

According to the draft, the Task Force began meeting in February 2013 and was chaired by Chief Peter Sheets with Fire Chief Kerwood assigned to assist. It is noted in the draft report that the Police Chief position changed three times during the study. The recommendations included in the draft are the products of discussion focused around key findings and observations.

1. Failure to keep up with the growth of the City of Hutto Public Safety delivery as to keep the citizens safe and secure;
2. Planning for the anticipated growth over the next 20 years.
3. Exercising more control over all Public Safety disciplines to deliver services to the City of Hutto.

The draft report found that the solution to most all of the challenges of Public Safety are tied directly to dollars but the Task Force believed it possible to work within these constraints to improve the Public Safety System. Unfortunately, the Task Force's timeframe expired prior to the finalization of the report.

Analysis

OVERVIEW

According to the draft report, the task force process was to allow for building relationships that would lead to collaboration and effectiveness as well as collaborative planning and improvements within a cross-functional conversation of public safety leaders. These goals were also included in the City Council's adopted Task Force Guidelines. However, the draft report was divided into each public safety discipline with no collaborative or cross-functional recommendations included. There was also no record of public input during the process. As such, this analysis will concentrate on the separate disciplines included in the draft report.

The draft report did not provide a clear description of the existing conditions of public safety in Hutto. There is no evidence of analysis of the different public safety services as they currently exist. In particular, there were no calls for service data compilation or analysis provided nor a current budget analysis for any of the five entities participating in the Task Force. It would have been very beneficial to have this data compiled annually to better understand the trends in calls for service among the various Hutto public safety agencies.

Furthermore, the analysis does not include information on the future demographic make-up of the City that was used to guide discussions related to future service needs. While it is known that City staff presented on "Municipal Projections" on July 31, 2013, and the Hutto ISD presented on "School District Demographics" on August 28, 2013, the information from those presentations was omitted from the report. Inclusion of this data in the report is necessary to understand the proposed recommendations and how they would address future growth.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY ESD #3

The recommendations included for Williamson County Emergency Services District #3 in the draft report are:

- Purchase the land for Fire Station #2, Fire Station #3, and Fire Station #4.
- Build, equip, and staff Fire Station #2 and Fire Station #3.
- Consolidate Hutto Fire Rescue personnel under the City of Hutto so that all fire protection personnel staff align under the City's chain-of-command.

These recommendations are largely based on a 2012 Insurance Standards Office (ISO) report. This report provided Hutto with an improved ISO Rating of 2. The highest rating that can be provided is a 1. There has not been a Council policy established to achieve an ISO rating of 1.

The draft report fails to recognize that of the 1,584 calls in a two year period (2013-14) for Hutto Fire/Rescue, only 15 (less than 1%) were fire-related. The remainder of the calls were medical-related or district coverage/citizen assist. There is a lack of acknowledgement in the draft report regarding the

medical-related calls for service and the ability for this high service need to be addressed in a cross-functional manner. However, this was not explored in the recommendations.

HUTTO POLICE

The recommendations included for the Hutto Police Department are:

- Increase the number of police officers to meet projected response needs
- Provide facilities, equipment, and vehicles that will accommodate an expanded police force.

These recommendations are not based on a metric nor are existing conditions documented. There has not been any policy guidance regarding staffing in terms of metrics or type of calls for service. It is acknowledged that the staffing of the Hutto Police Department has remained the same for the last five years even with a 175% increase in the call load. However, a more data driven decision regarding how much discretionary patrol time each officer should have would ensure that Hutto remains a safe city for all of its residents.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The recommendations included for Williamson County Emergency Medical Services are:

- Monitor the current EMS delivery model and make changes that specifically benefit the citizens of Hutto.
- Increase the delivery of emergency medical services (EMS) to the citizens of Hutto by Williamson County EMS via Hutto-dedication EMS units or implement a fire-based EMS system.

While monitoring the current delivery model is a valid recommendation, it does not improve or begin to analyze the needs or requirements of Hutto residents. Without the documentation of what the needs are for Hutto residents, it remains difficult to allocate resources that benefit the residents.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The recommendations for Williamson County Emergency Communications are:

- Implement a City of Hutto oversight committee to monitor the services provided by Williamson County Emergency Communications to the Hutto Public Safety agencies.
- Maintain the current arrangement of dispatching services with Williamson County Emergency Communication for both Hutto Police Department and Hutto Fire/Rescue, but make changes as the population and call volume of both agencies increase by adding Public safety agency specific dedicated dispatchers.

The recommendation of establishing a Hutto designated dispatch station would require agreement from Williamson County Emergency Communications and a trigger as to when this arrangement would begin. For example, if Williamson County Emergency Communications currently dispatches 34,000 calls annually for the Hutto Police Department and 1,584 calls for Williamson County ESD #3, the maximum capacity needs to

be determined by Wilco Emergency Communications in order to identify when a designated dispatch station would be needed.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The recommendation for Williamson County Emergency Management is:

- Maintain the Current arrangement under the Williamson County Emergency Management Plan for the City of Hutto but make changes as the population increases.

With Hutto's phenomenal growth, the need for a separate and distinct emergency management plan is becoming more of a necessity. Since the draft report was written, the City has been required to appoint a separate Emergency Management Coordinator due to the resignation of Fire Chief Kerwood from that position for the City. This leaves Hutto having two separate emergency management responses and duplication of personnel and response. As such, the City has submitted separately for FEMA reimbursement and is increasing the training and expertise of incident command so it can perform all of these functions during an emergency.

CONCLUSION

The Public Safety Task Force began the conversations needed to guide the future of Public Safety in the City of Hutto. The City Council continued these discussions through the "Ensuring Hutto's Safety" series this past summer. However, the Public Safety Task Force report failed to fully address the guidelines established by the City Council in the time frame prescribed. The report lacks the following:

- The data used by the Public Safety Task Force in making its recommendations;
- An analysis of the current state of public safety services in Hutto;
- Detailed recommendations including implementation strategies, associated costs, and metrics based on community needs and industry best practices.

Addendum: Financial and Data Compilation

CALLS FOR SERVICE

Although not included in the task force draft, the following information provides an additional perspective on the calls for service, the financial capacity and cost per call.

TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE, 2013 & 2014

	Police	ESD #3	EMS
	34,496	1,584	1,382
% of Total (37,462)	92.08	4.23	3.69

FY13 AND FY14 FISCAL ANALYSIS

PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY	EXPENDITURES	COST PER CALL FOR SERVICE
Hutto Police	\$5,754,694	\$166.82
Williamson County ESD #3	\$3,367,114	\$2,125.70
Williamson County EMS	\$916,000 ¹	\$1,299.29

In order to understand the current conditions, the following overview was pulled from agencies in order to provide perspective on call volume. The Expenditures are representative of expenses from FY13 and FY14 as reported in the audited Statement of Activities (net of long term debt).

¹This figure was provided by Williamson County EMS as the estimated annual cost for Williamson County EMS in Hutto in 2014. This number was divided by the 705 calls for service reported in 2014 to calculate the Cost Per Call For Service.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY EMS IN HUTTO

94% of the EMS calls in Hutto are run by Medic 3 (located in Hutto)

The average response time is 6.48 minutes which is less than the County average.

In 2014, there were 705 calls for service or 1.93 calls per day.